

management leadership
employee involvement
worksites analysis
hazard prevention and control
safety and health training

Department of Energy

VPP

StarBurst

Spring 2000

A Quarterly Newsletter For And About DOE's Voluntary Protection Program

To Our DOE-VPP Community

From the Desk of David Michaels



VPP have seen tangible improvements and successes in fewer employee injuries and lost-work days; increased employee morale, productivity, facility pride, employee empowerment and participation; decreased downtime and absenteeism, and an overall positive cooperation and commitment among workers, management, and labor.

To date, the DOE/VPP has welcomed six contractors into the program. In addition, several other companies are actively engaged in various stages of applying for acceptance into the program as recognized participants.



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The growing enthusiasm throughout the complex for participation in the program shows that VPP is working! Our contractors know that when they

See 'DOE-VPP Community' — page 2

As we embark into a new millennium, I want to take this opportunity to reflect on the successes that the Office of Environment, Safety and Health (EH) has witnessed over the last several years in safety in the workplace. Of many opportunities that the Department has embarked on to encourage safety, certainly the DOE Voluntary Protection Program (DOE/VPP) has helped lead the way to enhance safety performance in DOE. Since its inception six years ago, our DOE/VPP has become a key vehicle in encouraging and recognizing excellence in occupational safety and health protection across the complex. Notably, all participants in the DOE/VPP



West Valley Demonstration Project Contractor Awarded Star Certification

The Department of Energy (DOE) welcomed West Valley Nuclear Services (WVNS) at the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) into the DOE Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) at the Star level in February 2000. WVNS, now the sixth contractor to become a recognized participant in the DOE-VPP, has demonstrated significant

achievement and corporate commitment to safety and health program excellence that goes far beyond basic compliance. A DOE-VPP team verified the accomplishments and successes of WVNS in implementing the DOE-VPP criteria for STAR certification during an onsite evaluation of WVDP in November 1999.

See 'West Valley Certification' — page 5

participate and achieve recognition in the VPP, they have reached a significant benchmark, ranking them with world-class commercial companies that are top performers in safety and health.

Though we have made great strides, the DOE/VPP will continue to evolve to effectively meet the challenges of the DOE community and to EH's role to be a positive corporate influence for the DOE. To this end, several program enhancements are already underway, such as inclusion of Federal operations into the scope of VPP; development of specific DOE/VPP requirements for DOE hazardous waste and cleanup operations; increased emphasis on radiation safety; and demonstrated fulfillment of Integrated Safety Management requirements prior to program acceptance.

The Department is committed more than ever to support the continued expansion and enhancement of VPP throughout the complex. Through a continued atmosphere of openness, cooperation, commitment to safety and health, and partnership with our commercial and Federal counterparts, I know we can continue to identify and implement needed program improvements that will most effectively address the challenges that lay ahead. I look forward to working together and our continued success in the coming year.

David Michaels, MPH, PhD
Assistant Secretary
Environment, Safety and Health

Honeywell, Inc FM&T/Kansas City Plant Recertified as Star

The DOE Office of Environment, Safety and Health recertified Honeywell, Inc. (formerly AlliedSignal) Federal Manufacturing and Technologies (FM&T) at the Kansas City Plant (KCP) as a STAR level participant under the DOE-VPP in February 2000. Located in Kansas City, Missouri, KCP manufactures a wide array of mechanical, electrical, and engineered material components for national defense systems.

Honeywell (then AlliedSignal) FM&T/KCP first received DOE-VPP STAR-level recognition in March 1996. During August 1999, a DOE-VPP evaluation team conducted an onsite review of Honeywell FM&T/Kansas City Plant to reevaluate the company's status as a DOE-VPP STAR site. The team conducted an in-depth evaluation of Honeywell FM&T's programs and procedures, as well as numerous interviews with managers and employees, focusing on program changes since the initial visit. Reevaluations are conducted triennially for companies that have obtained STAR level status under the DOE-VPP. The reevaluation confirmed that Honeywell FM&T/KCP continues to maintain the occupational safety and health program at the STAR level with a high standard of safety culture and performance established by the management and employees.

KCP, established in 1949, has been producing nuclear weapons components for DOE for half a century. In 1993, DOE officially designated KCP as the consolidated site for all nonnuclear components for nuclear weapons.



Beth Sellers, DOE Kansas City Area Office Manager, presents the STAR Recertification Certificate to FM&T President, Karen Clegg

Beth Sellers, Manager of the DOE Kansas City Area Office presented the STAR Recertification certificate to FM&T President, Karen Clegg. During this special ceremony, all Honeywell, Inc. FM&T/Kansas City Plant employees were recognized for their support and commitment to not only maintaining its certification standard, "but" as Beth Sellers pointed out, "we went a step further by going to another level of accountability." "Of the nearly 100 facilities and sites within the entire DOE capable of attaining VPP Star status, we were the only production site that has been recertified," she said. "This demonstrates to the world our continued commitment to safety; it says that the people and safety are important to the Kansas City Plant.

"STAR" is the highest of the three levels that can be attained under VPP. VPP recognizes work sites that have achieved excellence in worker safety and health protection through cooperation among labor, management, and government.

For more information or for copies of both the initial evaluation and reevaluation reports, visit the DOE-VPP web site at <http://tis.eh.doe.gov/vpp/>.

WVDP's Great Winter Safety Challenge

by Linda Calderon, WVDP Coordinator

The West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP), located 35 miles south of Buffalo, New York, has challenged its employees and site contractors to maintain a zero winter accident record for the 1999-2000 winter season. The "Great Winter Safety Challenge," initiated by the Safety Success Team, one of WVDP's employee-based, volunteer safety committees, is an example of the high level of commitment to safety which has earned WVDP their status as a DOE Voluntary Protection Program Star site. The program is backed by the site's Environmental, Safety, Quality Assurance, and Laboratory Operations Department.

The winter safety campaign at the environmental management facility targets the entire site, including anyone



who walks and works at the site. This includes DOE, New York State Environmental Research and Development Authority, and West Valley Nuclear Services subcontract and service subcontract employees, as well as visitors.

To help site personnel focus on the main objective of the campaign, general winter messages have been developed, including reduce the slip and fall risks associated with winter conditions and increase personal awareness of those hazards. Additionally, a series of contests and giveaways have taken place

throughout the winter, including a snowbrush/ice scraper giveaway, "ugly boot" contest, and "guess the snowfall" contest. The campaign ran through March 31, 2000. ★

**We'd Like to Hear
From...**

You!

*Send comments, ideas, and/or
contributions to the editor:*

Carlos Coffman
Office of Worker Health and Safety

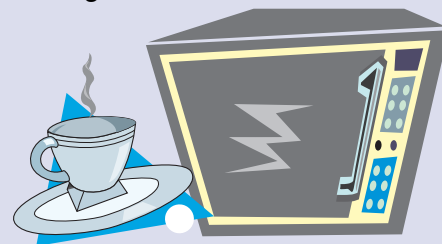
Fax: 301-903-2239

Email:
carlos.coffman@eh.doe.gov

*For more DOE-VPP news and
information, visit the DOE-VPP
web site at*
<http://tis.eh.doe.gov/vpp/>

A Safety Tip for Office and Home Taking Caution When Microwaving Water...

Cautions! Severe injury can occur when water alone is heated in a microwave oven. Individuals have received debilitating burns from water heated in this manner, such as in a coffee mug. A very clean cup has no nucleation points to initiate boiling, and the water can become superheated beyond the usual boiling point. If mechanically disturbed in this state, such as by inserting a spoon or adding beverage mix, the stored energy can be released all at once. When this happens, only a small fraction of the hot water turns to steam; the rest can erupt and travel a significant distance, severely burning and injuring anyone in its path.



To prevent such an occurrence, remember when heating water in a microwave oven to place something in the cup to diffuse the energy, such as a wooden stir stick or tea bag; or, as the safest precaution, bypass the microwave and just boil the water in a tea kettle. ★

REMEMBER — We welcome your safety tips, whether they are for home or office. Send your tips to: carlos.coffman@eh.doe.gov

Safety In Action at WIPP

by Bertha Cassingham, WIPP VPP Coordinator

Normally, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) would be nearly deserted at 4:00 a.m., but on the morning of March 26, 1999, hundreds of people came out to witness history—the first shipment of transuranic waste arriving at WIPP. Obviously the safety precautions for that event not only involved the trained personnel conducting security and radiological inspections before the vehicle could go beyond the holding area, but the extra precautions involving large crowds outside in the dark, excited people pushing through for a good view, and then —screams in the night. But no—no screams of injuries! These were screams of excitement based on an experience of a lifetime! How did this come about? Well frankly, it was futile to try to convince the public that WIPP would be safe for thousands of years without an operational safety system that was above reproach, so the quest and subsequent successes in safety management excellence laid a foundation that ensured those were screams of success, not injury. But that night, with its myriad of safety challenges was just the beginning of many new safety challenges.

Operational! What a great feeling. But no time to rest on safety awards here.

Whether it is operating the special crane used to lift the 3,500 pound outer lid off of the Transuranic Package Transporters, loading standard waste boxes onto a facility pallet, unloading waste from the hoist that carried it underground, or even the trip down the mine drift to the underground panels of the repository—safety challenges continue. Yet, the safety foundations in place have not only held, but assisted us in meeting these challenges while providing continuing initiative for consistently ensuring that safety remains the number one priority at WIPP.

That priority is focused ever stronger as we forge ahead with our Resource Conservation and Recover Act Hazardous Waste Permit. The issuance of the permit meant that mining would now become a priority. With additional shifts added to help in mining and mucking of the salt, WIPP is exceeding its goal of 400 tons per shift in mining. The hazards in mining were the initial focus of safety at work nationwide in the formation of the Mine Safety & Health Administration, and are still a concern today. With machinery like WIPP's new 60 ton miner that is 37 ½ feet long and 12 ½ feet wide, using 1,000 volts AC power to produce 740 horsepower, injuries can be devastating.

Or consider driving a dump truck 14 ft. tall, 15 ft. wide, and 27 ½ ft. long carrying 45 tons of salt through pedestrian traffic you can't even see (like a doll standing below the bumper of your car). Yet even though those safety challenges are not just the backyard sandpile variety, WIPP's safety focus has proven innovative in developing features for the miner that allow the operator to see better, stay further away from the salt dust, and work safer.

Now operational, now mining—that was not enough. In addition to fulfilling its primary mission as a safe and sound repository for transuranic wastes, the WIPP is also making efforts to maximize the benefits for the taxpayers from this federal facility. One example is the establishment of the Center for Applied Repository and Underground Science (CARUS). The objective of CARUS is to conduct applied technology development and scientific research at WIPP using the project's unique facility, infrastructure, and human resources to address broad-based issues related to waste management, repository science, global nuclear material management, natural resource extraction, biophysics, and particle astrophysics.

Recent CARUS activities included the continued measurement of neutrinos by Los Alamos National Laboratory, a thorough characterization of the natural background radiation in the WIPP underground, and the completion of a preliminary demonstration of transparent monitoring of nuclear waste – the so called "Transparency Project". The transparency project was presented and received high marks at the DOE International Conference on "Geologic Repositories" held in Denver in November 1999. Several high potential research projects, such as the Solution Mining Project and the Observatory of Multi-flavor Neutrino Interactions from Supernovae have been



See 'Safety in Action', next page

STARBURST / SPRING 2000



The 200-acre WVDP is located near West Valley, New York, about 35 miles south of Buffalo. The former commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing facility operated from 1966-1972 and generated 600,000 gallons of liquid high-level waste. After a period of dormancy, the site was reopened for operations when the U.S. Congress passed the West Valley Demonstration Project Act. President Jimmy Carter signed the Act into law in 1980. As a result, DOE along with the State of New York now have joint responsibility for manage-

ment of the site. Currently, the site's primary mission is twofold: (1) to safely solidify approximately 600,000 gallons of liquid high-level (radioactive) waste into a durable, solid glass—a process called vitrification; and (2) to clean up and close the facilities used. Over 800 WVNS and DOE employees work at the project.

Visit the DOE-VPP web site at <http://tis.eh.doe.gov/vpp/> for more information or a copy of the onsite review report which documents the DOE-VPP review team findings.★



'Safety in Action' — continued from Page 4

proposed and are expected to be funded in the near future.

All the development and research activities are conducted with the "Safety First" mentality. They are also scheduled around the TRU waste receipt, handling, and disposal operations to ensure the primary mission of the project has the first priority.

WIPP has a reputation for a TRIPLE CROWN of SAFETY EXCELLENCE based upon the quality of the Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division's (WID)* safety foundation and the resulting accomplishments. Those accomplishments were:

- Received VPP STAR status in 1994 and recertified at the STAR level in 1999.
- Retained registration of its environmental management system under ISO 14001.
- Received verification of its Integrated Safety Management System.

But the newcomers at WIPP insist that the TRIPLE CROWN of SAFETY EXCELLENCE must be our current safety record in three new major areas at once: Waste Handling, Mining, and CARUS. In fact, safety could not be maintained at current levels with so many new major areas at once if not for our safety foundation. Joe Epstein, WID General Manager, states, "Vice President Gore has stated that the Voluntary Protection Program is the 'premier example of partnership between government, management, and labor'. VPP is certainly that, but it also provides the continuous improvement culture necessary for new activities and new programs to be effectively implemented – safely! Our VPP program and resultant Triple Crown of Safety Excellence have allowed us to develop increased knowledge and confidence in the WID's ability to safely deliver customer expectations."★

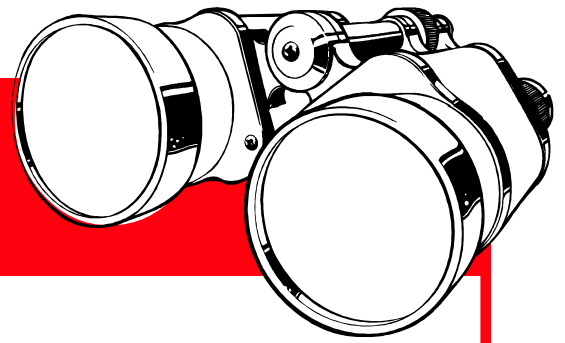
For more information about WIPP, visit their website at: <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us/wipp.htm>

Note: * Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division is the M&O Contractor for WIPP

Do you have a best practice at your site that you would like featured in this newsletter? As part of its charter to promote and recognize safety and health program excellence and achievement, EH is looking for proven site work practices, approaches, innovative solutions, and program models that can be shared and communicated with others across the complex. For more information on the DOE-VPP Best Practices Program, contact Dave Smith at 301-903-4669. ★

VPP

Word Search



1. The DOE-VPP is strictly _____.

2. When an _____ is withdrawn, a DOE-VPP coordinator will _____ all applicable points of contact.

3. Careful review of the _____ to verify accuracy and completeness is essential.

4. Safety _____ records are reviewed during the onsite evaluation.

5. Informal _____ take place during the onsite evaluation.

6. _____ reviews are always confidential.

7. The Team Leader is responsible for preparing a _____ report following the format prescribed in the Onsite Review Handbook.

8. _____ records and records of _____ controls are helpful documents for onsite reviews.

9. An applicant approval is final when EH-1 signs the _____ letter.

10. _____ point of contact provides assistance in resolving safety and health problems or identifying resources where assistance can be found. The Primary DOE-VPP POC makes sure that the approved site receives information pertinent to its safety and health program.

11. The _____ Office Manager ensures that the Primary DOE-_____ has copies of all reported safety and health concerns, chemical leaks/spills, and fatality/catastrophe investigation reports concerning a DOE-VPP participant, as soon as they are completed.

Words can be found horizontally, vertically, diagonally, and backwards.

HINT: Answers can be found in the DOE-VPP Procedures Manual

See answers on page 8.

Y	R	A	T	N	U	L	O	V	P	P	Y	I	U	E
H	E	S	L	A	I	T	N	E	D	I	F	N	O	C
A	N	N	A	U	D	I	T	S	Q	G	I	J	T	I
Z	G	O	V	S	U	O	M	O	N	O	T	U	A	F
A	I	I	O	X	M	W	E	I	N	C	O	R	G	F
R	N	T	R	Q	H	X	N	I	O	E	N	Y	O	O
D	E	A	P	D	G	I	Z	M	S	F	R	R	N	A
R	E	R	P	N	A	E	M	O	C	W	M	A	S	E
A	R	E	A	R	D	I	L	L	S	A	G	T	I	R
F	I	P	T	S	T	C	A	D	L	H	B	E	T	A
T	N	O	I	T	A	C	I	L	P	P	A	S	E	V
U	G	T	E	D	I	G	N	I	N	N	A	L	P	W
U	E	E	H	D	L	Z	E	T	I	S	F	F	O	F
S	R	R	E	V	I	E	W	S	D	V	T	C	C	G
B	R	M	D	Q	H	O	Z	R	S	V	K	T	A	R

12. Changes in _____ may have a possible impact on DOE-VPP participation.

13. Job _____ reviews and process safety analyses are documents reviewed during the _____ re-evaluation.

14. The _____ notifies a Headquarters DOE-VPP Coordinator when an application is received.

15. _____ identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the contractor's safety and health program as currently implemented at the site(s).

16. Safety and Health _____ documents are part of the review process.

17. The Team Leader may explain the approval and post-approval procedures to the applicant during the _____ meeting.

18. Employees from _____ are organized by one or more collective bargaining units.

19. _____ assistance provides application information, explanation, and assistance to interested contractors and employee groups.

20. _____ cannot be taken lightly when preparing for an onsite evaluation.

Upcoming Events



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May 18	VPP Application Workshop — San Diego, CA
May 19	Region IX Networking Conference — San Diego, CA
June 6 - 8	Region II VPPPA Chapter Conference — Atlantic City, NJ
June 9	VPP Strengthening Star Quality Workshop — Atlantic City, NJ
June 9	VPP Application Workshop — Atlantic City, NJ
June 14 - 15	Region I VPPPA Chapter Conference — Springfield, MA
June 21	VPP Application Workshop (Region III) — Hershey, PA
June 22 - 23	Region III VPPPA Chapter Conference — Hershey, PA
June 21 - 23	Region IV VPPPA Chapter Conference — Orlando, FL
June 21	VPP Application Workshop — Orlando, FL (Hosted by Region IV)
August 28 - 31	16th Annual National VPPPA Conference — Seattle, WA

For More Information on VPPPA Calendar Events:
<http://www.vpppa.org/calendar/indexSubmit.cfm>

2000 National VPPPA Conference

The Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association (VPPPA) will hold their 16th Annual National VPPPA Conference in Seattle, Washington, on August 28-31, 2000. This year's theme is "Soaring Beyond the Star." More than 1500 representatives from leading companies in safety and health excellence are expected to participate and exchange the latest best practices for workplace safety and health, and environmental protection. The four-day event also will feature speakers Bob Bigony, Senior Vice President of Motorola, Inc., and Charles Jeffress, Assistant Secretary of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

DOE will be well represented

with presentations by Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Morrison Knudsen at the Weldon Spring Site Remedial Action Project, and Fluor Daniel. In addition, EH will be making presentations on fire protection in emergency response and beryllium worker protection.

For more information on the DOE-VPP participation in the National VPPPA Conference, contact Carlos Coffman at 301-903-6493.

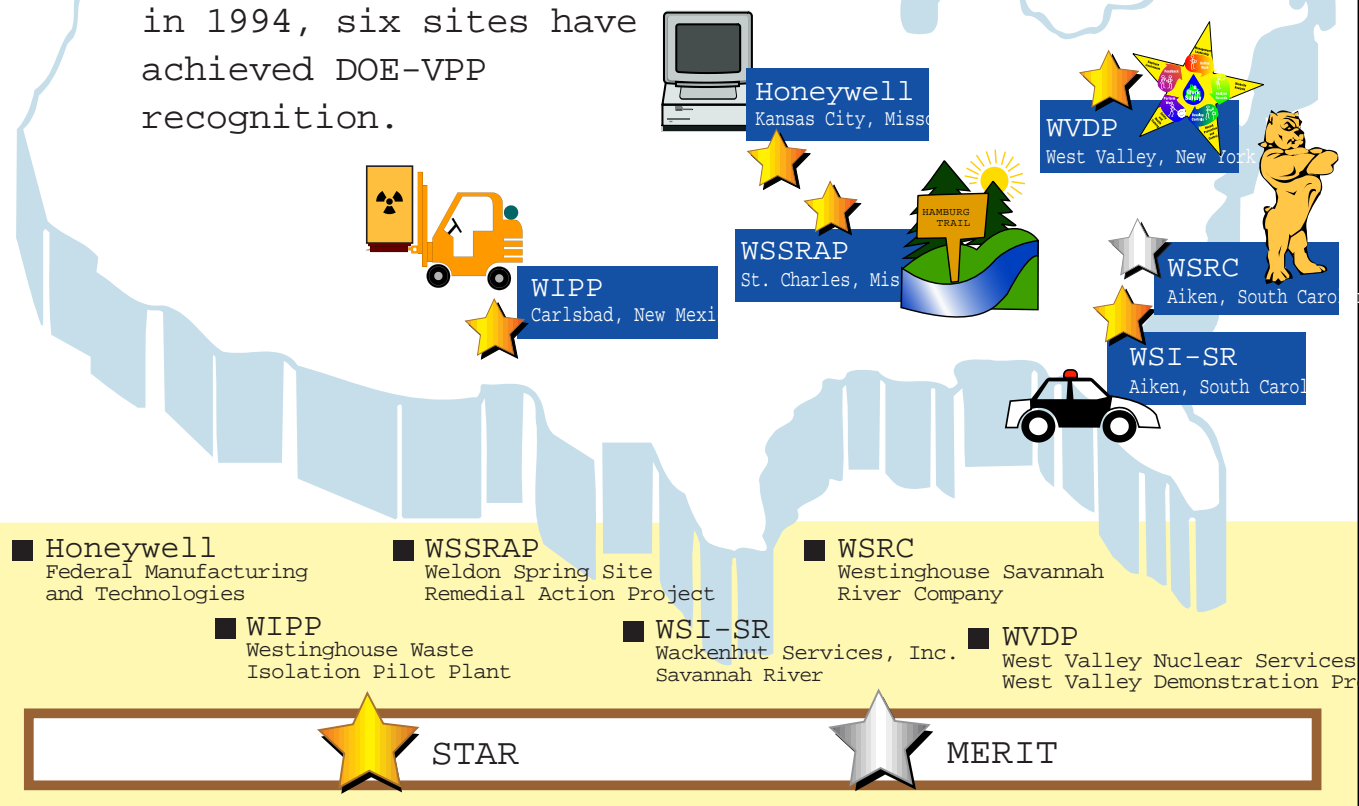
The VPPPA, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, is a leader in safety, health, and environmental excellence through cooperative efforts among labor, management, and government. For more information about the conference or the VPPPA, visit their web site at <http://www.vpppa.org/>.

Upcoming Issues — We Need Your Input!

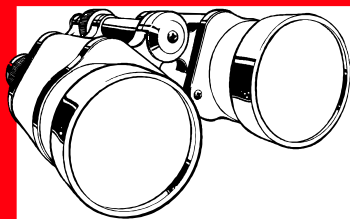
The theme of each of the next upcoming issues of the STARBURST will feature one of the VPP Tenets. The theme of our next issue is "Management Commitment." Your input will enhance the utilization of the STARBURST as a resource for shared information and insight. Please submit your experiences relative to "Management Commitment" to Carlos Coffman (carlos.coffman@eh.doe.gov) no later than June 30, 2000.

DOE-VPP Sites

Since program inception in 1994, six sites have achieved DOE-VPP recognition.



VPP Word Search



U.S. Department of Energy VPP
Part II: Procedures Manual

Key

From puzzle on Page 6.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Voluntary | 8. Medical/Engineering | 15. Audits |
| 2. Application/Notify | 9. Approval | 16. Training |
| 3. OSHA log | 10. CSO | 17. Close-out |
| 4. Committee | 11. Operations/VPP/POC | 18. Unionized sites |
| 5. Reviews | 12. Injury Rates | 19. Offsite |
| 6. Formal | 13. Hazard/onsite | 20. Planning |
| 7. Draft | 14. Area Office | |

